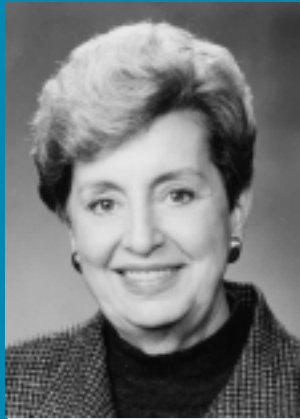



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Representatives
Pat Scott and Aaron Reardon
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



38th District Citizens' Survey



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Committees:
Local Government, Co-Chair
Transportation
Organized Crime Advisory Board,
Vice-Chair



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Finance, Vice-Chair
Agriculture and Ecology
Technology, Telecommunications,
and Energy

February 2000

Dear Neighbor:

As we prepared for the 2000 Legislative Session, we recognized the opportunity voters had given us to make clear, responsible decisions about the issues that are important to our community. We are dedicated to focusing our efforts on identifying priorities, living up to our responsibilities, and improving opportunities for the citizens of our state.

This session, we will address the impacts of Initiative 695. This initiative, passed by the people, repeals the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax and requires a vote of the public on tax increases. We believe that this initiative has given us the opportunity to reinvent government, which is why we are writing you today.

In this newsletter survey, we have tried to describe some of the issues we will address this Legislative Session. We are interested in your thoughts. Once you've finished the survey, re-fold and tape it so our address appears on the front. You can then stamp and mail it.


Thanks again for your time and input. It is an honor to work for you in our state capital.

Sincerely,


Representative Pat Scott


Representative Aaron Reardon



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PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Representatives
Pat Scott and Aaron Reardon

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General fund:

Should we transfer dollars from other areas of spending?

The state’s \$20.6 billion general fund pays for a tremendous variety of Washington programs. (This two-year spending plan is separate from the \$4 billion biennial transportation budget, and both are hit hard by the elimination of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax, or MVET, under I-695.) For the most part, the general fund pays for public schools, higher education for students of all ages, health care and social services for a wide cross section of our residents, corrections programs such as state prisons, debt service, and other government programs like natural resources management.

• If you think we should cut general-fund programs to pay for areas normally paid out of the transportation budget, which general programs would you tap (except for debt service, which we are obliged to pay)?

Public schools

Higher education

Health and human services

Corrections

Government programs like natural resources management

Other?

As you may know, we have a general-fund balance and emergency reserves right now of about \$950 million. These funds are intended for use during times of financial despair. Some want to spend these reserves as a one time shot to cover losses in transportation and other programs. However, once the reserve is used, the state will be vulnerable in the event of an economic downturn or an unforeseen crisis. Others have suggested amending Initiative 601 (the voter initiative approved in 1993 that caps government spending by no more than the rate of inflation plus population growth) to allow us to use some of the emergency-reserve fund, and some think that we need to save this money and prioritize existing revenue and spending. What do you think?

● Spend the general-fund balance?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● Amend Initiative 601 to spend the emergency reserve?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● Prioritize existing revenue and spending while leaving the reserves and fund balance alone?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● All of the above?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

Mass transit:

How important is it that we continue reducing congestion?

No one knows better than Everett and Snohomish County residents how congested Interstate 5 and other area highways can be at rush hour. The voter-approved spending cap from 1993 leaves us with \$78 million in “wobble room” to cover the loss of several billion dollars in MVET revenue. Over the next several years, we’ll lose as much as \$7 billion in the transportation budget for mass transit, ferries, freight mobility projects, and highway safety and maintenance. (However, these are many of the projects voters approved with Referendum 49 in the 1998 election.)

Community Transit and other local transit systems were hit hard by this initiative. Some transit officials are already cutting routes and hours of service, and raising ticket prices. Should we take money from highway-safety and maintenance programs to maintain high-quality bus service? What do you think?

● Preserve the current level of mass-transit funding by taking money from other areas of the transportation budget?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● Preserve the current level of ferry funding by taking money from other areas?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● Preserve the current level of highway-safety and maintenance funding by taking money from other areas?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

Other programs:

How will we fund public safety and public health efforts?

A large portion of the license-tab revenue went for police and fire safety in local communities statewide. This creates a challenge. During the next three and a half years, communities stand to lose more than \$180 million for public-safety services. Law-enforcement officials have stated that as many as 1,000 police officers might have to be laid off. What do you think?

● Keep the current level of public-safety funding by taking away money from other parts of the budget?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

License-tab revenue also supported county public-health programs (estimated loss in the next three and a half years: \$91 million). These valuable programs range from immunizations for children, to flu shots for elderly citizens, to inspections of restaurants and day-care facilities. What should our state do?

● Keep the current funding level for these programs by taking money from other budget areas, such as Washington’s share of the tobacco settlement with Big Tobacco and 46 states attorney generals?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

New revenue:

How will Washington residents fund transportation projects?

I-695 repealed transportation Referendum 49 as a method of funding transportation projects, such as HOV lanes, state-run ferries, and freight mobility relief for trade choke points like the Port of Everett, Highway 2, and I-5 from Everett to Marysville. The governor already has created the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation to examine funding options for state transportation projects. Law-makers need to hear from the public how to respond to these issues. How would you fund transportation needs in Washington?

● Use a portion of the budget surplus?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● Raise the gas tax?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

● Increasing ferry fares?

Yes

No

Your suggestion

Other legislative priorities:

What’s important for you during the 2000 session?

In addition to tackling I-695’s impact, the Legislature will address other important issues during the short, 60-day session. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being more important, how do you rate these issues?

1. Authorizing local governments to set restrictions on mini-casinos

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

2. A Patients’ Bill of Rights

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

3. Affordable health insurance

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

4. Increased support for public education

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

5. Clean Water

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

6. Controlling access to your private records, from groups like credit agencies

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

7. Helping communities revitalize their downtowns, in Everett and Marysville

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

8. Restricting the release of sex offenders into our communities

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

9. Job Training and Retraining

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10